

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

1. Employment for men in Surry County increased by only 172 jobs from 1950 to 1960 because of declines in agriculture and furniture, which were barely covered by gains in other industries. Employment for women expanded by 60%, mostly in textiles, apparel, and agriculture industries, all of which are long-run nongrowth industries. Nevertheless, the economy expanded in total employment, achieving competitive gains of 3,461 jobs over growth rates of the respective industries. However, because of the nongrowth nature of most of the local employment, 2,313 of the gains were wiped out, still leaving the county with a net gain of 1,148. Since most of the local industries are short-run gainers in long-run declining industries, no net economic growth was projected. Encouragement of new activities--support plants and market-oriented plants, to take advantage of Mount Airy's location near large metropolitan centers, and new local trades and services--was stressed.
2. Measures of income, business activity, education, and housing, were used in assessing the quality of Mount Airy's Style of Life. Grave community problems in each area were discussed:
 - a. Despite high average income figures for the Town, weaknesses were found to lie in the extremes of poverty and affluence, an income distribution not conducive to optimal Town welfare.
 - b. The Town's position of strength as a trading center is being threatened by inaction on the part of the interested parties!
 - c. Retention of a large labor pool of unskilled, uneducated, low-income workers, while many better-educated young adults leave the area, holds the Town's levels down. A proposed new community college could upgrade the whole area.
 - d. Although Mount Airy was on a par with State urban housing standards, its surrounding communities had half substandard housing.
3. In view of the particular economic structure of the Town, its area, and Surry County, no net economic expansion was foreseen. Heavy out-migration of young adults during the past decade, it was suggested, is likely to continue. Consequently, the present numbers of young adults and children are expected to remain rather stable. Middle-aged adults may be expected to decrease, particularly during this decade. The gains in population between now and 1980, small though their projections may indicate, will be accounted for in increases in the elderly.
4. In event it has not been sufficiently stressed elsewhere in this report, THE FUTURE IS IN THE HANDS OF THE CITIZENS OF MOUNT AIRY: IT IS MY CHALLENGE TO THEM THAT THEY IMPROVE ON MY ASSESSMENTS OF THE FUTURE.